(b) if so, what is the mechanism evolved to enforce it; and

(c) by when it would be brought into force?

THE MINISTER OF STATE INTHE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRITAPAN SIKDAR): (a) to (c)The Central Board of Excise & Customs had not made any proposal regarding duty on cellular phones. However, the Government as part of the Budget 2002-2003 has decided to exempt cellular phones and pagers from countervailing duty. The basic customs duty has been increased from 5% to 10%. The effective duty on cellular phones has been brought down from 26.67% (Basic 5%, CVD 16% & SAD 4%) to 14.4% (Basic 10%, CVD 0% & SAD 4%).

Village public telephones

793. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of village public telephones commissioned by private basic telecom service operators during the years 1999-2000, 2000-2001 and first 9 months of 2001 -2002 togetherwith the target for the corresponding period, circle-wise, company-wise and year-wise;

(b) the corresponding number of BSNL and erstwhile DoT, circle-wise and year-wise; and

(c) the action contemplated by Government on companies who default on rollout conditions on VPTs?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) The requisite information is enclosed as Statement-I (Seebelow)

(b) The requisite information is enclosed as Statement-II (See below)

(c) Government has recovered Liquidated Damage (LD) charges for their delay in performance and made it clear that their committed performance obligations cannot be diluted in any case. Government has asked them to complete the unfulfilled committed roll out obligations by December, 2002 against submission of Additional Performance Bank Guarantees and Deed of Guarantees. Further, Government has already taken appropriate steps to resolve their problems.

Statement-I

Provision of village public telephones (VPTs) by Private Licensees

S N	Licensee and Licensed Circle	Effective Date of Licence	Committed target* for VPTs in first Three years (as per obligations under Licence Agreement)			Total No. of Committed VPTs in 1st 3 years	No. of VPTs actually provided[A] yearwise during 1999-2000, 2000-2001 & first 9 months of 2001-2002		
			I Year	II Year	III Year		4/99-3/00	4/00-3/01	4/01-12/01
1	M/s Tata Teleservices (Andhra Pradesh)	30.9.1997	9635 (by 30.9.1998)	(all villages were to be covered in first year *i.e.* by 30.9.1998)		9635	Nil	5	10
2	M/s Reliance Telecom (Gujarat)	30.9.1997	8635 (by 30.9.1998)	(all villages were to be covered in first year *i.e.* by 30.9.1998)		8635	Nil	Nil	Nil
3	M/s HFCL Infotel Ltd. (Punjab)	30.9.1997	5442	(all villages were to be covered (by 30.9.1998)		5442 in first year i.e. by 30.9.1998)	Nil	Nil	Nil
4	M/s Hughes Tele.com (India) Limited. (Maharashtra)	30.9.1997	4000	21760	No village was to be left (by 30.9.1998) (by 30.9.99)	25760	Nil Uncovered	Nil	103 30.9.99
5	M/s Bharti Telenet (Madhya Pradesh)	30.9.1997	5500 (by 30.9.1998)	5500 (by 30.9.99)	5500 (by 30.9.2000)	16500	12	336	Nil
6	M/s Shyam Telelink (Rajasthan)	04.3.1998	7439 (by 04.3.1999)	10629 (by 4.3.2000)	13766 (by 4.3.2001)	31834 [367271**	Nil	169	40
	TOTAL		40651	37889	19266	97806	12	510	153

* Translated into absolute terms based on bid/tender documents keeping in view the committed targets for Direct Exchange Lines (DELs) and the figure for number of uncovered villages indicated in the tender.

** The total number of uncovered villages in Rajasthan Service area is only 31834 as against the licensee's commitment of 36727.As reported by the licensees.

Statement-II

Provision of village public Telephones (VPTs) by Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd. (BSNL)

Circle	Number of VPTs provided wise during		
	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002 (upto 31.1.02)
Andhra Pradesh	15	4	18
Gujarat	0	0	0
Punjab	39	564	0
Maharashtra	165	0	0
Madhya Pradesh*	3546	1527	1071
Rajasthan	548	98	27

*Madhya Pradesh includes Chhatisgarh also.

Schemes/Programmes for I.T. in Assam

794. SHRI PRAKANTA WARISA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the schemes/programmes formulated by Government to provide benefits of information technology to the residents of rural, hilly, tribal/ remote and backward areas of Assam; and

(b) if so, the amount allocated and released and disbursed for implementation of the above scheme?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS, MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): (a) and (b) A number of programmes/project have been initiated to provide benefits of information Technology to people of Assam. The details of all the projects/programmes are enclosed at Statement-I. Employment Generation Training Scheme (EGTS) initiated by Department of Information Technology (DIT) in Assam is provided separately in Statement-II. Details of Extension Centre of Electronics Research and Development Centre of India (ER&DCI) and placed at Statement-III.